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Second Place**

**Hear Lived A Great Street Sweeper**

Throughout this past year, our county experienced a war with Iraq. On the battlefield, there were people of every race-there were black soldiers, white soldiers, Asians, Hispanics and Middle Eastern military men and women. They were every race, yet they were one people-the American people.

“I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless night of racism and war that the daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality. I believe that unnamed truth and unconditional love will have the final word” These words were spoken by the American Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. The truth of these words was displayed after the tragedy of September 11, when the United States did not break apart, but came together. Many of us did not recognize racial distinctions, but found one American identity. We recognized the need for peace.

A few years ago, I went on a retreat to Rome, along with large group of students my age called “The Young for Unity”. On the final day of the retreat, 14,000 young people from every continent marched from the Coliseum to Vatican City as a march for world peace. Each of us was given umbrellas with the instructions to sign our names on each others’ umbrella if we believed in world unity. Throughout the march, people would come to me with their umbrella and a pen, and I knew what they wanted. We did not need a common language to unite us. Everyone signed umbrellas for each other, without differentiating between the many races present there. All of us understood that this was the way to promote universal brotherhood. But I do not need to be in a

foreign country to start reaching for the goal of world peace. God wants to use me where I am.

I believe Martin Luther King's vision of world peace starts in the small, seemingly insignificant actions of one person. When I hold the door for the person behind me, help someone pick up their fallen books, or wipe the kitchen table after dinner, I am one of the "Young for Unity". I do not have to be a member of the United Nations or a representative in Congress to be a part of achieving Martin Luther King's goal of world peace. Mother Theresa was a simple teacher with a heart for the poor. Because she touched the wounds of those dying in poverty in one city, she touched the hearts of people all over the world. To achieve peace, I must do the best I can with what I have where I am.

As Martin Luther King wisely stated, "If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the host of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well'".